Fungal Meningitis Outbreak—Lessons Learned

Janet Crigler, MT

Last fall the United States was shocked as reports began surfacing of a fungal meningitis outbreak from patients who had been injected with contaminated medications. The tainted vials were compounded by the New England Compounding Center (NECC) in Framingham, MA. As of March 4, 2013, a total of 720 cases, which includes 48 deaths, have been reported in 20 states. Upon investigation by the authorities, a history of many deficiencies and violations at the NECC were uncovered. The FDA had noted in 2003 a potential for harm, and the MA Board of Pharmacy had investigated at least 12 separate complaints, with several of these associated with serious adverse events. So, what happened? Why were they allowed to continue?

The US House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing in November 2012 to discuss whether this terrible fungal outbreak could have been prevented, and investigated the process failures. Some of the deficiencies stated major errors, such as:

- Distributing lots of medications before results of sterility testing were received
- Testing autoclaves to ensure proper function
- Standing water from leaky boilers adjacent to clean rooms
- Air conditioning turned off at night, resulting in fluctuating humidity levels.

Many of us work in medical facilities that are inspected by various accrediting bodies, and cannot imagine what would happen if our facilities were allowed to practice in this manner. This terrible event reminds us that it is everyone’s responsibility to maintain a clean work environment, to follow our policies and procedures, and to notify the proper authorities when deviations from these procedures occur. When errors occur and are allowed to continue, the consequences can be deadly.

Sources:
- CDC Health Alert, March 4, 2013
- “Congressional Hearing Probes Deeper into Fungal Meningitis Outbreak”, Virgo Publishing, 11/15/12

WV Legislative News Alert

Kimberly Cheuvront, PhD

On October 21, 2011, the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses issued a position statement declaring that Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Certified Nurse Midwives are permitted to delegate the administration of medication only to medical assistants who have completed "a nationally recognized accredited program of study with a curriculum that included pharmacology and medication administration," and who have a "current national certification through the American Association of Medical Assistants," and for whom "related competencies have been verified within the past twelve months." Although there is no state society affiliated with the AAMA in West Virginia, AAMA informed a prominent medical assisting educator in West Virginia about this position statement of the Board of Nursing. AMT will be contacting the WV Nursing board to be viewed as at least equivalent to AAMA in the eyes of the WV Board of Examiners for Registered Prof Nurses.

The WVSSAMT Mountaineer Med Line is published twice a year. It is sent to all state members, National Board Members, Councilors, and Editors to inform them of our state society and upcoming events. Any article appearing in the newsletter represents the opinion of the author and not necessarily the WVSSAMT unless the article is so designated.
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Editor’s Message

Spring is almost here! Spring is a time of renewal, and I hope you will consider renewing your commitment to our profession. Our spring meeting will be held April 5th in Fairmont, and you will find the meeting notice in this issue.

National Dental Assistant Week is in March, and National Lab Week is in April. Please send me a quick update on your activities, and I will feature them in the next issue of our newsletter.

I am always looking for scientific, management, or student articles to include in our publication. If you like to write and have something you would like to share with our group, please forward your article to jcrigler@fghi.com for future publication.

Hope to see you on April 5th in Fairmont!
Janet Crigler, MT
Editor, WVSSAMT
President’s Message

Fellow AMT members,

I am so thankful that this is our spring newsletter because that means spring must be close. Before you know it, it will be summer, and time for the National Convention. It will be in our backyard this year in Pittsburgh, PA, July 8-12, 2013. I personally have only got to attend a couple of times, but it was so nice and quite a learning experience.

Our spring meeting of the West Virginia State Society is scheduled for Friday, April 5, 2013, in Fairmont, WV. Registration will begin at 5:30. Inside this newsletter is the meeting notice with all the information. We will be electing delegates to the national convention.

Please bring your membership cards.

We would really like to know what fun things your lab is doing for lab week. Email your activities to me (Tonnie70@frontier.com) or any board member.

We would like to include your stories on our website. This is a time for us to be honored for all our hard work.

If at any time you have any questions, comments, or new ideas please let us know. We would love to see some new faces at our meetings.

Sincerely, Tonya Brown, WV State Society President

Eastern District Councillor’s Message

Janet Crigler, MT

Happy spring! I hope that everyone survived this snowy winter and is ready for some sunshine and warm temperatures! I have just returned from the Spring Board and Council meeting and have some news to share:

The 75th Educational Program and National Meeting will be held in Pittsburgh, PA, during the week of July 7-12, 2013. We will be meeting at the Omni William Penn Hotel. Pittsburgh is a beautiful city and is the home of over 50 museums, including the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Andy Warhol Museum. A short drive away is Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural masterpiece and one of the most famous private homes ever built. Shopping and dining opportunities abound, and Three Rivers Casino is also nearby. Room rates are $119.00/night – be sure to apply for the free Omni Select program when you make your reservations. This will allow you to receive many perks while staying at the hotel in Pittsburgh (and at any other Omni hotel you may visit in the future). Perks include free wifi, morning beverage, newspaper, turndown service, and more. Diane Powell is finishing up the preliminary program and has retained several speakers in the medical field from the greater Pittsburgh area. Be sure to watch the AMT website and your AMT Events for more details.

Future National Convention sites:

July 7-11, 2014 – Chicago, IL Drake Hotel Room rates $119.00/night. (we may have an opportunity to tour the AMT Office)

June 2015 – Kohala Coast, Hawaii – Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel Room rates $169.00/night – start saving now for this wonderful opportunity!

National Dental Assistants Week is March 3-9, 2013. This year’s theme is “Dental Assistants Promote Healthy Smiles”.

National Laboratory Professionals Week is April 22-28, 2013. This year’s theme is “Laboratory Professionals Get Results”. Thank you to both groups for all you do to keep our patients healthy.

National award winners were selected by the Board of Directors at their spring meeting. While I cannot divulge the winners until they have been notified, I would like to say that the Eastern District was once again well represented. Congratulations to all of the well-deserving recipients!

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your district councillor. If I can be of service, please feel free to contact me at jcrigler@fghi.com.
5:00 – 5:30  Registration

5:30 – 6:00  Dinner – Catered by Eighth Street: Lasagna, baked chicken, potatoes, salad, drinks and dessert

6:00 – 7:00  “Traumas and the ER”, Christopher Edwards MD, Emergency Medicine, Fairmont General Hospital

7:00 – 8:00  “Gastrointestinal Markers and Testing” Dr. Danyel Tacker, Clinical Chemist, West Virginia University

8:00 – 8:30  Business Meeting – Bring your current membership cards. We will be voting on delegates to the National Convention.

If directions to Fairmont General Hospital are needed, attendees can call (304)367-7447

Please make checks payable to WVSSAMT and mail to:

Deanna Wilson-Ayers  Name:
Route 2, Box 242  Address:
Shinnston, WV  26431

_____  No charge - WVSSAMT Member
_____  $10.00 – Non-Member
_____  $5.00 – Student
Delegate’s Report

Kimberly Cheuvront, PhD
I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve on the National board and to represent the great state of West Virginia at the National Convention. The San Antonio, Texas location was the first convention that featured the phase in to shorten the number of days of the convention. The week started with committee meetings Sunday through Tuesday. The meetings were very busy and very productive. Please let Tonya or Janet know of your interest to serve on a national committee. The opening ceremony and welcome party were spectacular events as we were entertained by a live band at the welcome event. As always, the awards ceremonies were beautiful and memora-
ble events. The week was filled with excellent educational sessions. The session on diabetes presented by David Plaut was outstanding. The keynote speaker was very inspirational and the general sessions were very informative. The district councillors presented an informative session on updates to the banking system. The town hall session on Friday morning began with committee reports followed by constructive discussion and ideas by the members. During the business meeting, the housekeeping amendments to allow meetings by telephonic or electronic media, and that written meeting notices may be sent by electronic mail were passed.

AMT board election:
At the election held during the annual business meeting that took place on July 13, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio, re-elected to a three year term were Mary Burden, MT and Jeff Lavender, MT. Elected to fill the term of the third RMA position on the board was Heather Herring, RMA.

AMTIE board election:
Elected to three year terms on the AMTIE board were Linda Jones, MT and Taffy Durfee, MT.

Attending a national convention as a delegate is an amazing opportunity. I encourage all of you to make plans to attend Pittsburgh in 2013.
Welcome New Members!

CLMA
Roach, Orville – Huntington
CMAS
McCarty, Ashley – Terra Alta
White, Jessica – Morgantown
MT
Gebremedhin, Assefa – Huntington
Johnson, Rachel – Oak Hill
McCoy, Thurman – Mount Gay
Montgomery, Tanise
RMA
Allen, Mia – Charleston
Bayer, Maranda – Hedgesville
Bennett, Mary – Martinsburg
Benson, Toby – Kingwood
Berry, Kayla – Martinsburg
Bigger, Jaclyn – Berkeley Springs
Casto, Tina – Charleston
Clendenin, Christina – Alum Creek

Are Those Lab Tests Necessary? The Choosing Wisely Initiative

Janet Crigler, MT
Your family member has gone to their family practitioner for their routine check up, and now has a requisition to get some labs drawn. You look at the order and think, “Are those lab tests really necessary?” The ABIM foundation has created the “Choosing Wisely” initiative to help doctors and patients discuss the overuse of tests and procedures to help patients make smart choices about their care. As we all know, patients are more involved in their care, and often come to their doctor with their medical information, requesting tests they feel they “need”. According to ABIM, the list of five things physicians, laboratorians, and patients should question are:

- Don’t perform population based screening for 25-OH-Vitamin D deficiency.
- Don’t perform low risk HPV testing.
- Avoid routine preoperative testing for low risk surgeries without a clinical indication.
- Only order Methylated Septin 9 (SEPT9) to screen for colon cancer on patients from whom conventional diagnostics are not possible.
- Don’t use bleeding time test to guide patient care.

I remember early in my career receiving phone calls in the lab from the nursing units to come upstairs and draw “Stat RAPs” (Routine Admission Procedures) on patients. A CBC, RPR, and a UA was performed on every patient that was admitted to our facility. Just as we no longer perform routine labs on every patient, we may be cutting back on how many Vitamin D tests, or MRSA screening swabs we perform each day. The initiative has gained the support of several physician groups - stay tuned to see if this initiative continues to grow.

Source – “Choosing Wisely – an Initiative of the ABIM Foundation” February 2013

Cook, Brenda – Brandywine
DeLeonardo, Jessica – Charles Town
Efax, Tionna – Fairview
Frazier, Shante – Martinsburg
Frollo, Theresa – Martinsburg
Harvey, Athena – Morgantown
Holmes, Katie – Charleston
Hudson, Michelle – Martinsburg
Johnson, Keri – Princeton
Langland, Pamela – Kearneysville
Leggett, Cynthia – High View
Mahoney, Jessica – Inwood
McCarty, Ashley – Terra Alta
McFalls, Treva – Berkley Springs
Metheny, Danielle – Bruceton Mills
Miller, Carol – Fairmont
Nelson, Michelle – Martinsburg
Riggleman, Chasity – Bunker Hill
Rojas, Dolly – Fairmont
Roman, Kaelan – Kingwood
Roper, Christine – Shendoah Junction
Rose, Tina – Dunbar
Smith, Holland – Morgantown
Smith, Lindsey – Bluefield
Spake, Christina – Rippon
Spangler, Sheila – Charles Town
Watson, James – Burton
Weatherholtz, Christina – Martinsburg
Webster, Lisa – Berkeley Springs
Weis Jr., Jimmy – Mullens

RPT
Cook, Brenda - Brandywine
Mullens, Jason – Hico
Williams, Jessica – Oak Hill
Yost, Ann – Beckley
Jay Ford discusses Biohazards and Funeral Homes

Dr. James DeMarco lectures on the kidney and its functions

Dr. Ravi Chivukula explains how lab data helps with prescribing psychotropic medicines

Michelle Lester speaks on Hospice Care, their philosophy and service

Shelli Jacques and Ginger Johnson, veterinary technicians, enlightened the group with lab results on their animal patients

President Tonya Brown and Treasurer Deanna Wilson-Ayers pose for the camera
In Memoriam

Margaret “Peggy” Garrett, MT (AMT)
1935-2013

Margaret “Peggy” Garrett was a lifelong active member of WVSSAMT. She held many offices, including President, Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member, and helped coordinate many state meetings over the years. She represented WV as a delegate to numerous AMT National Conventions and loved to travel. She served on many state and national committees, and was the Proctoring Chair for WV for many years. Peggy loved to crochet, and could be seen at most state meetings with a crochet hook in her hand, fingers working furiously as she listened to the educational sessions. She donated many homemade afghans over the years for our WV state basket for the Welcome Party at National Convention. She received the national Distinguished Achievement award, and was the first recipient of the WV Mountaineer Excellence Award in 2012 for her service. Peggy was proud to receive her 50 year pin from AMT. We will miss her smiling face at our state meetings. Thank you, Peggy, for your hard work and many years of service to AMT.
Mark Your Calendar

AMT 75th Educational Program & National Meeting • July 8–12, 2013

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

To know Pittsburgh, you have to see it for yourself. Come and see a city that has had a remarkable environmental renaissance, a top-10 city for certified green building space, a city ripe with natural and cultural amenities.

• Pittsburgh International Airport is nation’s third largest airport.
• In a statement to the New York Times Prince Phillip said that Pittsburgh is the only city he has ever seen that has an entrance. The first glimpse of the Golden Triangle upon exiting the Fort Pitt Tunnel, on the way in from the airport, is absolutely incredible.
• There are 50 museums located in and around the Pittsburgh area.
• Pittsburgh, the “City of Champions,” is a sports fan’s paradise with a new football stadium and new baseball park.
• Located just a short drive from Pittsburgh is one of the most famous private homes ever built, Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural masterpiece.

Omni William Penn Hotel

FEATURES:
• Downtown’s location – many restaurants and shopping within walking distance
• Located just 18 miles from airport
• Self parking $13.75 weekdays, $5.00 weekends
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• Each guestroom has coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron and ironing board
• When a guest joins the free Omni loyalty program, he/she will receive many complimentary benefits during his/her stay, such as complimentary Wi-Fi service, morning beverage delivery, pressing of clothing items, bottled water, shoe shine, newspaper.
• AMT attendees will receive 15% discount in all hotel restaurants.

Omni William Penn Hotel
530 William Penn Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 281-7100
Website http://www.omnihotels.com/
Find A Hotel/
PittsburghWilliamPenn.aspx

AMT Convention room rate:
$119.00
plus 14% taxes (rate valid from July 2 to July 15, 2013)

American Medical Technologists
Certifying Credentials in Clinical Lab
For additional information:
Contact AMT:
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Rosemont, IL 60018
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Upcoming Events

National Dental Assistants Week
March 3-9, 2013

WVSSAMT Spring Meeting
Fairmont General Hospital
April 5, 2013

National Laboratory Professionals Week
April 22-28, 2013

AMT 75th National Convention
Omni William Penn Hotel
Pittsburgh, PA
July 8-11, 2013

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